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# To Close a Giant Eye: The Pantheon, 1591

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TO CLOSE A GIANT EYE:  
THE PANTHEON, 1591

*Summarium.* — Innocentius IX initio sui pontificatus Congregationem Reformationis instituit, ad quam aliquos cardinales aliosque viros primarios vocavit, ut cleri et populi, praesertim Urbis Romae, vitae ac moribus prospiceretur. Congregatio inter plura alia ecclesiam S. Mariae Rotundae (Pantheon) usibus Romani Seminarii esse tribuendam censuit, exstructa prius laterna supra «oculum» ad arcendas aquas pluvias, insertisque tribus magnis fenestris ad eam illuminandam. Obitus Innocentii IX post duos solos menses ab eius electione executionem horum consiliorum praevenit. In appendicibus summarium rerum ab ista Congregatione Reformationis tractatarum necnon epistula architecti Giacomo della Porta rationem immutationum Panthei describens in lucem eduntur.

For the ancient Romans the Pantheon was at once a temple and a monument, and it remains today the single most impressive symbol of Roman greatness. Abandoned by the early Christian emperors, it did not entirely escape barbarian plunders, but in 609 Boniface IV consecrated it as a church to *Sancta Maria ad Martyres*. Its remarkable preservation is largely due, after its inherent mass and stability, to its religious function through the centuries. Even this did not entirely save it from the Barberini Pope Urban VIII (1623-1643) who melted down the bronze ceiling from the portico to build cannon and Bernini's famous baldacchino over the high altar of St. Peter's, thereby provoking the famous quip, *Quod non fecerunt barbari, fecerunt Barberini*. The Pantheon's role as a church could also work against its preservation because the building is not particularly well adapted to traditional Christian worship. Well known is the project started by Urban VIII and carried through by Alexander VII to equip the Pantheon with a pair of bell towers. For the project the popes employed the greatest architect of the age, Gian Lorenzo Bernini. It was probably Bernini's least successful creation; known as «the ass's ears», the towers subtracted from the massive simplicity of the Roman facade and were taken down in 1883<sup>1</sup>. All this is common knowledge.

What remains entirely unknown is a 1591 project to adapt the Pantheon for Christian worship that, had it been carried through, would have radically changed the building. Innocent IX was elected pope on October 29, 1591. Almost immediately he appointed a Congregation to consider reforms needed in the city of Rome. The Congregation had five members, Cardinals Federico Borromeo, Agostino Cusano, Fernando de' Medici, Gabriele Paleotti, and Agostino Valiero. Borromeo, Paleotti and Valiero were all ardent and famous reformers. The Congregation also had three consultants: Silvio Antoniano, whose distinguished career as humanist and administrator was later crowned with a red hat; Claudio Aquaviva, General of the Jesuits, and Antonio Possevino, S.J. It was Possevino who worked as the

<sup>1</sup> The literature on the Pantheon is very large. A good recent introduction is WILLIAM L. MACDONALD, *The Pantheon: Design, Meaning, and Progeny*, Cambridge, Mass. 1976.

Congregation's executive secretary, who pushed the Pantheon project, and whose papers preserve the Congregation's plans<sup>2</sup>.

Possevino's career as papal diplomat is well known; in the decade 1577-1587 he travelled through Scandinavia and eastern Europe dealing with monarchs, negotiating treaties and founding seminaries. He also accumulated enemies, including Claudio Aquaviva. In 1587 Aquaviva effectively exiled Possevino to the Jesuit college at Padua, where Possevino worked as preacher and wrote his *magnum opus*, the *Bibliotheca Selecta*. In 1591 Possevino got permission to come to Rome to expedite the printing of his book by the Vatican Press. Shortly after his arrival his old friend Giovanni Antonio Facchinetti became Innocent IX and assigned Possevino two tasks: to write a refutation of Machiavelli and to serve as consultant to the Reform Congregation<sup>3</sup>.

The report of the Congregation dealt with many questions, for example with new regulations for the Roman prostitutes, but the section that most interested Possevino and which bulks largest in the report was the reorganization of the Roman Seminary. Previously the seminarians had taken classes with the other students at the Jesuits' most distinguished school, the Collegio Romano. Today it is known as the Gregorian University after Gregory XIII, who subsidized its main building (now a high school) some two hundred yards west of the Pantheon. While Possevino and the Congregation felt that the seminarians should continue to study with the Jesuits, they wanted the seminary to be a separate institution with its own income, quarters and church<sup>4</sup>. The church they chose was S. Maria Rotonda, the Pantheon.

The canons who already served the church were a problem for which Possevino had an easy solution. Since they were few and several were absentees, let their income be allocated to the seminary as they gradually died off. Possevino likewise had designs on the income of three other nearby churches to subsidize the seminary, S. Maria in Via Lata (worth 5000 scudi *per annum*), S. Eustachio, and S. Lorenzo in Lucina. To house the seminarians Possevino took under consideration the Palazzo di Capranica and the residences of the Spanish Ambassador, of Cardinal Benedetto Giustiniani and of Cardinal Tagliavia de Aragon. In most instances the current possessors would be compensated by an annual fee, but the property would revert to the seminary on their death. These last projects remained in the discussion stage. Negotiations were actually begun to purchase the Casa de' Peruschi, one of several fifteenth century buildings that abutted directly on the Pantheon near the present Piazza della Minerva. From this building Possevino proposed to build a new entrance for the seminarians into the Pantheon. Possevino felt that the seminarians and their faculty could stage far more splendid ceremonies than could the canons, but a fundamental difficulty for the

<sup>2</sup> LUDWIG VON PASTOR, *The History of the Popes from the Close of the Middle Ages XXII*, St. Louis 1932, p. 421, barely mentions the Congregation. Possevino describes the Congregation and its work in his *Animadversiones in Historiam Thuani*, printed in FRANCISCUS ANTONIUS ZACHARIA, *Iter litterarium per Italiam*, Venice 1762, p. 301.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* There is no full modern biography of Possevino. The best general account is LIISI KARTTUNEN, *Antonio Possevino, un diplomate pontifical au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Lausanne 1908, but it covers only his diplomatic career. I am currently preparing a full biography.

<sup>4</sup> The seminary was set up in July 1564 by Pius IV and had the Palazzo of the deceased Cardinal Pio da Carpi as its first seat. It was occupied by twenty Jesuits and sixty-three seminarians plus other boarding students. RICCARDO GARCÍA VILLOSLADA, *Storia del Collegio Romano*, Rome 1954, pp. 81-82. There were two reasons behind the decision to separate the seminary more completely from the Collegio Romano: the growth of both institutions (the Collegio Romano had two thousand students in 1590) and the desire to isolate and clericalize the training of the seminarians.

ceremonies was the rain that came through the giant *oculus*, a circular opening in the dome twenty-nine feet in diameter which is the most striking feature of the Pantheon's interior. Possevino had a radical solution: build a lantern or small dome atop the opening similar to the lanterns on so many Roman baroque churches. He was perfectly aware of the obvious objection that the *oculus* provided almost all the light and air that came into the church<sup>5</sup>.

It would be easy to dismiss Possevino and the cardinals who accepted his solution as barbarians ignorant of esthetics and architecture. Nothing could be further from the truth. All the members of the Congregation were experienced in building churches. More importantly, Cardinals Borromeo and Paleotti were deeply interested in the relation of art to religion and wrote books on the subject<sup>6</sup>. Possevino included a tract on art and another on church architecture in his *Bibliotheca Selecta*, both of which have been the subject of recent studies<sup>7</sup>. Like most popes of the late sixteenth century Possevino and the Congregation of cardinals were more interested in utilizing and Christianizing than in merely preserving the monuments of antiquity. Typical was Sixtus V (1585-1590), who put statues of Sts. Peter and Paul atop the columns of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius; his architect, Domenico Fontana, claimed that had Sixtus V lived another year, he would have converted the Colosseum into a cloth factory<sup>8</sup>.

On technical questions the Congregation sought expert guidance. Possevino contacted Giacomo della Porta, Rome's leading architect, who had designed a number of works near the Pantheon, including the fountain in front of it. Della Porta did not lack self-confidence, for he had recently supervised the building of the dome of St. Peter's and had replaced Michelangelo's plan with his own design. In his reply to Possevino, dated December 6, 1591, della Porta stated that he had reflected on what Possevino had told him about building a lantern and solving the problem of light in the church. He recommended the lantern be made of wood with wooden braces since a stone lantern atop the *oculus* would be too heavy. The lantern could be covered with sheets of lead. A lantern would afford less light than the giant *oculus*; to increase the light in the interior della Porta suggested that three windows fifteen palms across and twenty high (about twelve by fifteen feet) be built above the last cornice, seemingly right into the dome itself. He estimated that the lantern would cost about three thousand gold scudi and the windows would be another two thousand. He also urged the building of a sewer around the church, but he refused to estimate its cost because of uncertainties about its size. The sewer would curtail dampness<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Possevino outlines these projects in a paper entitled «Modo per havere casa, chiesa et fundatione pe'l seminario Romano», Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu (ARSI), *Opp. NN.* 314, ff. 128-129. The document is in Possevino's autograph. The availability of the casa de' Peruschi was probably related to the fact that the first rector of the Roman Seminary was Giovan Antonio Peruschi, S. J. (1525-1598), a Roman.

<sup>6</sup> GABRIELE PALEOTTI, *Discorso intorno alle imagini sacre e profane, diviso in cinque libri*, Bologna 1582; FEDERICO BORROMEO, *De pictura sacra*, edited by C. CASTIGLIONI, Sora 1932.

<sup>7</sup> Possevino's tract on art is in his *Bibliotheca Selecta* II, Rome 1593, pp. 312-320; his treatise on architecture is *Ibid.*, II, pp. 207-212. Recent studies are JOHN PATRICK DONNELLY, *Antonio Possevino, S. J., as Counter-Reformation Critic of the Arts: Journal of the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association* 3 (1982) 153-164; ANTONIO SECONDO TESSARI, *Antonio Possevino e l'architettura*: Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu 52 (1983) 247-261.

<sup>8</sup> VON PASTOR XXII, pp. 236-239.

<sup>9</sup> ARSI, *Opp. NN.* 314, f. 322. Autograph letter. On della Porta see JACK WASSERMANN, *Giacomo della Porta's Church for the Sapienza in Rome and Other Matters Relating to the Palace*: Art Bulletin 46 (1984) 501-510; JOSEPHINE VON HENNEBERG, *An Early Work of Giacomo della Porta: The Oratorio del Santissimo Crocifisso di San Marcello in Rome*: Art Bulletin 52 (1970) 157-171.

The Congregation moved ahead rapidly and accepted the plans of Possevino and della Porta. The key passage in the formal Latin report that Possevino drew up for the pope stated that the cardinals were agreed that increasing the size and splendor of the Roman seminary should not be put off since it would help not only Rome but the Church universal. It noted that the Cardinal Vicar of Rome had already been urged to purchase the Casa de' Peruschi since it was for sale at a low price, near the Roman College, and next to the Pantheon so that an entrance into the church from the house could easily be built. The report endorsed the advice of Giacomo della Porta (*consilium primarii Romani architecti Iacobi à Porta*) about preventing rain from coming in because this is the obvious source of the dampness of the building. It noted that the same problem of dampness had been studied by another architect during Gregory XIII's pontificate<sup>10</sup>.

Fast as the Congregation worked, death moved faster. On December 30, 1591, Innocent IX died after a pontificate of only sixty-two days<sup>11</sup>. The new pope, Clement VIII, held Possevino and della Porta in high regard. He appointed Possevino to a Congregation to study the reform of religious orders, and della Porta continued as papal architect. The report on the Pantheon was quietly forgotten, and for the last four centuries the giant eye has remained open to heaven<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> There are two copies of the Congregation's recommendations or report, ARSI, *Opp. NN.* 314, ff. 93-96 and 107-110. Both are fair copies in a scribal hand. Both carry a title in Possevino's autograph, «Sommario de cose trattate in Cong<sup>ne</sup> della Riforma di Innoc<sup>o</sup> nono», ff. 96v and 110v. Other papers dealing with the Congregation's work but not bearing of the Pantheon project are *ibid.* ff. 89-92, 97-105, 111-114, 122-127. The earlier study by an unnamed architect during Gregory XIII's pontificate is probably *Bibliotheca Vaticana, Urbin. lat.* 1049, *Avviso di Roma*, dated 24 December 1581.

<sup>11</sup> VON PASTOR XXII, pp. 426-427.

<sup>12</sup> Possevino notes that he turned over the Congregation's report to Clement VIII: «Tum igitur plura mihi innotuerunt, quae quamvis ob breve illius Pontificatus spacium in rem conferri omnia non potuere: tradita a me (ut debebam) Clementi VIII Pont. Max. fuerunt». ZACHARIA (above n. 2), p. 301.



## Appendix

## 1

Summary of Matters Discussed at the  
Reform Congregation of Innocent IX*Rome, November-December, 1591**ARSI, Opp. NN. 314, ff. 93-96, fair copy;  
ff. 107-110, another fair copy.*

*The Reform Congregation set up by Innocent IX reached agreement on beginning with matters that are in the control of the Supreme Pontiff: 1. that a Jubilee be proclaimed; 2. that a letter be written to all archbishops; 3. that for the clergy of Rome and for the seminary for clerics these measures be taken: a) convoking a diocesan synod; b) acquiring a proper site for the Roman seminary; c) assigning to it the church of S. Maria Rotonda (the Pantheon); 4. renting or buying a hospice for needy bishops and enlarging the boarding facility for priests who come to Rome; 5. better organizing and controlling prostitutes; 6. discussions were held about a difference in dress for doctors who are clerics and those who are laymen; 7. Cardinal Ascanio Colonna reported in the name of the Pope on what regards the organization and increase of worship at the Lateran Basilica; 8. the Reform Congregation also discussed questions concerning the hospitals, on helping beggars, on the sale of offices, and on gifts to officials of Grace and Justice.*

Il sommario di quelle cose che il lungo di 2 mesi si trattarono nelle Congregatione della Riforma di Innocento IX<sup>1</sup>.

[f. 93r] Cum primum Congregatio Reformationis a Summo Pontifice Innocentio Nono initio sui pontificatus instituta est atque convenit, omnes in eam sententiam venerunt nihil potuisse sapientius fieri, quam ut ab ipsa ditione Pontificis, tanquam a domo propria tanta res inchoaretur. Sic enim et omnia sine strepitu processura, et exemplum hoc universae christianae Ecclesiae locuturum.

[1] Primo igitur eadem Congregatio auspicandum esse a iubilaeo, et universali oratione atque expiatione intellexit. Quod cum Summo Pontifici propositum fuisset, statim iussit ut executioni mandaretur.

[2] Deinde scribendum esse, probato et vetere Pontificum Sanctissimorum more, qui etiam inter compedes hoc praestabant, ad universos archiepiscopos christiani orbis, ut vocem Pastoris universalis audientes laetarentur, atque agnita eius Beatitudinis paterna sollicitudine magis cum suis coepiscopis animarentur ad greges suos pascendos. Sic vero scriberetur, ut nemini principum posse venire in mentem hoc nisi ex sincerissima charitate proficisci.

<sup>1</sup> There are two copies of this document, both in the same copiest's hand, ARSI, Opp. NN. 314, ff. 93-96 and 107-110. The title, in Possevino's autograph, is found on the bottom of 107r. The transcription printed here follows ff. 93-96 but has used the second manuscript to correct or clarify a few words. The spelling, which is not always consistent, follows the original, but capitalization and punctuation have been adapted to modern usage and abbreviations have been filled out.

[3] Sed cum eadem Congregatio sciret nihil eius Beatitudini ignotum esse earum rerum, quas vel novem tum illustrissimi tum primarii viri omnes a Paulo III foelicis memoriae deputati collegissent<sup>2</sup>, ad abusus ab ecclesia tollendos, quos item magna ex parte Tridentina Synodus tollere conata est, vel divus Dominicus Honorio Pontifici Maximo proposuit ad tollendum aulicorum otium ut pontificio palatio fierent — unde et primus sacri Palatii Magister creatus est<sup>3</sup> —, videret autem alias congregationes esse ab eius Beatitudine institutas, in quibus de iusta ratione administrandi reliqua urbana ageretur, existimavit in hoc potissimum esse incumbendum, ut quae ad Romanum Urbis clerum praecipue ad centum et tres parochias quae sunt intra Urbis moenia atque ad seminarium clericorum spectarent, ea primo, uti factum est, in Ecclesia ordinate tractarentur. [f. 93v]

[a] Ac cum ex visitationibus anteactis multa superesse videret, quae executione indigerent, plerique omnes concesserunt in eam sententiam, ut diocesana synodus eorumdem parochorum in palatio apud ecclesiam divi Ioannis Lateranensis haberetur, per Illustrissimum Vestrae Sanctitatis Vicarium, tum quod parochi praemoniti omnes difficultates quae potissimum videntur hoc tempore ac remedia in medium ponere et communi consilio curare breviori temporis spatio suaviter potuissent; tum quod haec ratio iam inde ab Apostolis coepta et ab oecumenicis synodis saepe mandata, deinde passim instaurando Divo cultui adhibita, erat hierarchiae Ecclesiae et dignitatis uti et pietatis praecipua conservatrix, praesertim autem apud primariam mundi ecclesiam, et in eo palatio, in cuius situ aliae synodi haberi solitae sunt. Quae videlicet synodus postea complanatura esset viam et provinciali synodo episcoporum, qui ad Romanum Patriarchatum attinent, et caeteris omnino episcopis qui sunt in Ecclesia stimulum additura, ut eandem rationem intrent, quam vidissent a matrice omnium Ecclesia fuisse in rem collatam. Neque vero hanc urbanam synodum diocesanam aliquid incommodaturam caeteris rebus, quas prudenter Illustrissimus Cardinalis Vicarius instituit, quin etiam addituram lumen, decus, et liquidiorum earum rerum notitiam, quae fortassis latent, quandoquidem in Spiritu Sancto congregata et praecantibus orationibus publicis, quae sanctissime institutae sunt ad huiusmodi synodos cogendas, ipseque ordo rite adhibendus in caeteris quae huc pertinent examinandis tanti momenti sunt, quanti esse omnes sunt experti, qui Ecclesiae spiritus secuti sunt ductum. Et vero praecipua rerum capita, de quibus esset agendum, esse iam ex Synodo Tridentina sic excepta a Doctore Michaeli Thomasio, in libro quem hac de re Pio Quinto Pontifice Maximo edidit, ut nil pene laboris esset insumendum<sup>4</sup>. Ad extremum autem cogitatum est, si examinatis [f. 94r] in synodo parochis, aliqua iis praescriberentur quae facienda essent, posse, dum per visitationem unum vel alterum post mensem diligenter habendam, cognosci an ipsimet parochi executi fuissent; qui autem fuissent in culpa, vel loco moverentur, vel poenis canonicis mulctarentur. Si qua vero communi omnium consilio in synodo viderentur, quae eius Beatitudinis auctoritate egerent, ea statim eius Sanctitati exponerentur, sive de pensionibus collendis a parochialibus beneficiis, sive de augendis redditibus per aliquas

<sup>2</sup> On the famous *Consilium de emendanda ecclesia* presented to Paul III in March, 1537, see LUDWIG VON PASTOR XI, 153-172. The nine were Gasparo Contarini, Gian Pietro Carafa, Gian Matteo Giberti, Jacopo Sadoleto, Gregorio Cortese, Reginald Pole, Federigo Fregoso, Girolamo Aleander, and Thommaso Badia. The text is printed in V. SCHWEIZER, editor, *Concilium Tridentinum* XII, Freiburg i. B. 1966, 131-145.

<sup>3</sup> St. Dominic is traditionally considered to have been appointed by Honorius III as first Master of the Sacred Palace, a post usually occupied by Dominicans, but the authoritative biography, M.-H. VICAIRE, *Saint Dominic and his Times*, trans. KATHLEEN POUND, London 1964, describes no such appointment.

<sup>4</sup> This reference is doubtless to Miguel Thomas (d. 1578), bishop of Lerida, called Taxaquetius; in 1565 he published at Rome his *Disputationes quaedam ecclesiasticae*, the second part of which is entitled: «De ratione habendi concilia provincialia ac diocesana, et de iis quae in ipsis praecipue sunt tractanda».

uniones ubi sunt tenuiores, sive deminuendo paroeciarum numero, ut huic tenuitati obviam iretur, ac munera parochialia cum dignitate ac charitate obiri possent; seu denique de omnibus parochialibus urbanis redditibus camerae ita applicandis, ut parochis inde certa pensio solveretur ne ob alienationes a suis praecessoribus factas, esset iis saepissime litigandum, quod quidem eos avertit a cura animarum, et vero Pius V sanctissimae memoriae his rationibus motus idem cogitasset ni immatura morte praeventus fuisset.

[b] Actum item est de Romano Seminario, cum et Patres Societatis diuturno usu cognoverint omnino expedire, ut id proprium haberet domicilium, quod ad collegii formam subinde aptaretur, id quod in conductis domibus effici nunquam potuisset: quae vero hactenus pensiones insumptae sunt, tam magnum palatium emere potuissent. Quam rem item probari sic Illustrissimo Vicario cognitum esset, ut primo quoque tempore velle cum Summo Pontifice intellectum sit. De vicina quoque ecclesia actum est, ubi functiones ecclesiasticae discerentur, sicuti fit in seminariis Greco et Anglico. De separandis laicis convictoribus a clericis, quorum ut finis, sic vita frugalior, et media debent esse alia; de aetate item, qua admittendi sunt clerici, ut operarii quantocius idonei fiant qui paroeciis, et cathedralibus [f. 94v] substituantur; deque modo qui adhibendus sit, ut cum egredi debeant e Romano Seminario alumni habeant unde vivant, nec dilabantur ad militare, aut ad aliud vivendi genus, quemadmodum hactenus factum est. De aliorum quoque episcoporum pauperum qui seminaria instituere non possunt alumnis, quos sive duos sive quattuor singuli in Romano mediocri sumptu alere possent; de aliis quoque clericis (si qui vellent, et digni essent) qui suis sumptibus in eodem Romano Seminario functiones ecclesiasticas doceri vellent admittendis ut et seminarii Romani numerus, et splendor, non solum hanc urbem, verum etiam universam Ecclesiam vel colostraret, vel iuvaret. De his inquam omnibus actum est tota Congregatione approbante quae huc pertinebant.

[c] Ac ne amplius hoc bonum differretur, praeter ipsam domum Peruscorum, quae est venalis, at in quam emendam propendere Illustrissimum Vicarium auditum est, cum et sine magna pecuniae erogatione apta sit, tum ob viciniam Romani collegii (est enim ad Minervae plateam) tum ob propinquam Rotundae ecclesiam in quam facili negotio e domo patere posset aditus. De qua Rotundae ecclesia quid fieri haud magnis sumptibus posset, ut ne pluvia in eam decideret, ut esset perspicua, ut aquae decurrentis humor ne irreperet, consilium primarii Romani architecti Iacobi a Porta et alterius item auditum est, qui hoc ipsum Gregorii XIII tempore perpenderat.

[4] Ad haec pertinere visa sunt, quae de pauperibus episcopis in proprium et quidem in nomine eius Sanctitatis vel conductum, vel emptum hospitium inducendis convenire visa sunt. Deinde ne episcopi alii quibus mediocris esset sese alendi facultas, ad cameras quas vocant locandas secederent, sed viri honesti aliqui [f. 95r] deligerentur, qui hanc curam susciperent. Quod et de aliis sacerdotibus qui huc ob negotia confluunt dictum est. De pauperibus autem sacerdotibus relatum est quaedam domus extaret in quam reciperentur, sed egere eam dilatatione et instauratione, ut plures ac commodius excipi possent.

[5] Actum etiam est de meretricibus in tria vel quattuor loca remotiora segregandis, numero earum minuendo, cum plures huc adventasse dicantur, postquam Neapoli novissime eiectae sunt. Ornatu item aedium et vestium in eis coercendo, quando haec omnia tendunt ad familiarum perniciem; genere item vestium mutando, ut ab aliis dignoscerentur; praeterea concionibus, quae statis temporibus Adventus, et Quadragesimae haberi iis praesentibus deberent ne omnino destituerentur hoc auxilio, quod et in Hispania fit. Ad extremum de proprio aliquo tribunali seu erecto, sive erigendo, per quod, quaecunque constituta essent de hac re, executioni libere mandarentur. Id quod cum Florentiae et alibi fiat, dubitandum non erat quin Romae effici posset. Esse enim turpissimum et scandali plenum ut ubique, quod nunc plena nempe calamitatum tempestate fit, meretrices apud honestas familias habitarent, ac Romanae virgines et alii ea illecebra ad turpitudinem averterentur.



[6] Iam de distinctione aliqua vestium clericorum, et laicorum doctorum, licet aliqua dicta sunt, sicut et de quibusdam aliis rebus, ea tamen relata sunt in aliud tempus, cum haec alias primo quoque tempore efficienda esse, utpote maioris momenti, intelligeretur.

[7] Interea Illustrissimus Cardinalis Ascanius Columna, nomine eius Sanctitatis ad Congregationem venit, quaeque ad divi Ioannis Lateranensis ecclesiam in ordinem ac pleniorum cultum redigendam spectant, diligenter retulit, quae suo tempore essent exponenda, ubi expensa adhuc a Congregatione iterum fuissent. [f. 95v]

[8] Praeterea actum est de hospitalibus, mendicis iuvandis, officiorum venditione et munerum acceptione a ministris Graciae, vel Iustitiae.

## 2

## Della Porta's Plan for the Pantheon

Rome, December 6, 1591

ARSI, Opp. NN. 314, f. 322r-v;  
entirely autograph.

*The architect holds the view that a wooden lantern should be built and covered with sheets of lead. To obtain more light, there is need to make three more windows in the side of the vault. He also advises a sewer around the church to check the dampness.*

+

Molto Reverendo Padre

Avendo lo visto et considerato tutto quello che Vostra Reverenza mi desse circa il coprimento dell'occhio della chiesa de Santa Maria Rotunda et a presso darli lume capace al ditto tempio, — dico che quanto al coprimento dell'occhio, il mio parere sarebbe de farvi sopra una lanterna di legniam, armata con armatura de travi et ben incastrata senza ofendere [sic!] la volta, perche giudico non esser capace ditta volta a ricevere sopra pesi gravi, et poi ditta lanterna, facendovi con finestroni vetriali della proportion del loco, coprirla tutta de lastre de piombo accio venga difesa dalle acque, impostare ditta opera facendola alquanto bassotta della proportion del sito della volta. Circa 3 mila scudi d'oro.

È necessario per dar lume alla chiesa far 3 finestroni sopra l'ultima cornice di dentro nel fianco della volta, facendoli andare a sguiesco [?] all'insu per arivare [sic!] con essi al piano sopra la cornice de fora, di palmi 15 di larghezza et altura fino a 20; metendo [sic!] li su aconci [sic!] et ornamenti dentro et fora et facendo le vetriate a tutti, — dico saranno capaci a dare sufficiente lume, et vi pel andar de spesa fra tutti circa 2 mila scudi.

Il chiavicone che proposi a Vostra Reverenza attorno [sic!] alla chiesa per di far pur levar la umidita per le acque et terrapieno che la sta attorno [sic!] sarebbe utilissimo et necessario massime per il comodo della chiavica che le passa acanto [sic!] che va al fiume, — dico di questo non ne o potuto far giudizio della spesa perche consta in saper la quantita della circonferenza attorno [sic!], che misurandola si potra far discorso della spesa.

Con la quale non ocorendo [sic!] altro le bacio le mani. Li 6 di Xbre 1591.

Di Vostra Reverenza affezionatissimo

S<sup>re</sup> Jac<sup>o</sup> Delaporta

[Verso, f. 322v:] Al Molto Reverendo Padre Signor Mio Hos<sup>mo</sup>,  
il padre Possevino della Compagnia del Gesù.

[Traces of a seal.]